

## Parenting Strategies to Improve Children's Health and Prevent Childhood Obesity: Food & Nutrition, Activity, Body Image



Lynn Paul, Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist  
Sandy Bailey, Extension Family & Human Development Specialist  
Jill Martz, 4-H Director  
Wes Lynch, Department of Psychology  
Carrie Benke, 4 Health Project Director  
Galen Eldridge, 4 Health Research Associate



Mountains & Minds



### Background Information

Parenting Styles  
Parents' eating behaviors  
Increasing Physical Activity

### Research

Concerns rural parents have regarding their pre-teen's health behaviors  
Challenges parents face in encouraging and promoting healthy behaviors



Mountains & Minds

### Parenting Styles

- Authoritative
  - Firm, but warm and accepting
- Authoritarian
  - Strict disciplinarian
  - Highly demanding, not very responsive
- Permissive
  - Highly responsive, few demands



Mountains & Minds

## Parents' eating behaviors

### Mother-daughter similarities

- Intake
- Disinhibition  
(overeating when tempting foods are available)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What might help

- Consistent family meals
- Appropriate portion sizes
- Exposure to and availability of healthy foods




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What *not* to do

- Teach kids to pay more attention to external cues than internal ones (hunger and fullness)
  - Use rewards
- Pressure kids to eat
- Restrict access to unhealthy foods




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Increasing Physical Activity

- Supporting and modeling
- Being active as a family
- Increasing time spent outdoors
- Moderating screen time

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Parents are encouraged to:

- Focus on being healthy
- Provide access to healthy foods, reduce access to unhealthy foods
- Avoid excessive restriction or food as a reward
- Encourage physical activity
- Reduce TV and video game time
- Model healthful eating and physical activity practices

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



1) What concerns do rural parents have regarding their pre-teen's health behaviors?

**Past research in rural areas shows that rural kids**

- Are more likely to be overweight
- Have low physical activity levels
- Face transportation barriers
- Far exceed screen time recommendations

In addition:

- Girls in rural areas may have poorer body satisfaction

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## 2) What challenges do parents face in encouraging and promoting healthy behaviors?

### Past research in rural areas:

Perceived barriers to:  
Healthy eating  
Physical activity  
Healthy lifestyle



## Parents Promoting Health

**Lynn Paul, Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist**

**Sandy Bailey, Extension Family & Human Development Specialist**

**Carrie Benke, 4 Health Project  
Director**



## Current Situation

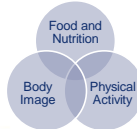
- **Parents play a key role in promoting their family's health and preventing chronic disease, such as childhood obesity.**
- **Children today are less active, have less healthy diets, and poorer body image than youth 10 years ago.**
- **Genetics and environmental factors play a role in childhood obesity, but parents can greatly impact their children's health.**



## Be A Healthy Role Model for Children

**Parents** are the most important influence on their children.

Three areas of interrelated health influences:




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 10 Tips for Parents Promoting Positive Body Image

1. Set a good example through your own actions.
2. The same goes for your words!
3. Take stock of your cupboards.
4. Wear clothes that express who you are, regardless of your size or shape.
5. Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.
6. Provide regular family meals.
7. Remember: there's no such thing as a "joke" about someone's body.
8. Keep an eye out for weightist messages in the media.
9. Encourage and support your children in a sport and other activities.
10. Let your children know that you love them, no matter what they weigh!

The Parents Guide to Full of Ourselves- 2005 Steiner-Adair & Sjostrom




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 10 Tips for Promoting Healthy Eating Habits

- 1) Show by example
- 2) Go food shopping together
- 3) Get creative in the kitchen
- 4) Offer the same foods for everyone
- 5) Reward with attention, not food
- 6) Focus on each other at the table
- 7) Listen to your children
- 8) Limit screen time
- 9) Encourage physical activity
- 10) Be a good food role model

Reference: MyPyramid, USDA




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 8 Tips for Parents Promoting Physical Activity

1. Set a positive example by being active.
2. Provide opportunities to be active.
3. Offer positive reinforcement.
4. Make activity fun.
5. Ensure activity is safe and age appropriate.
6. Find a convenient place to be active regularly.
7. Limit the time your children watch TV, video games.
8. Find fun things to do with family.

Reference: American Medical Association



Mountains & Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 1. Model It: Show, practice, correct

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image



Mountains & Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 2. Provide Family Time: Invest in your family

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image



Mountains & Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 3. Encourage Healthy Behaviors: Contribute to a lifetime of health

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image



Mountains &amp; Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 4. Praise, Reward, Reinforce: Focus on specific behaviors and discuss what led up to the behavior and the results

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image



Mountains &amp; Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 5. Limit Screen & Media Time: Develop richness in your children

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image



Mountains &amp; Minds

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 6. Listen to Your Children: Teach them the value of being heard

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 7. Promote Their Individuality and Creativity: Find their uniqueness

- Food and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Body Image




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---